

AN
EXAMINATION
Of the CASE of the
QUAKERS,
CONCERNING
OATHS
Propounded by them, A. D. 1673.
To the Consideration of the
KING,
And both Houses of
Parliament.

With a Vindication of the Power of the Magistrate
to impose Oaths, and the Liberty and Duty of all
Christians to Swear by God Reverently; Humbly
Submitted to the Judgment of His Most Sacred Majesty,
and the Two Houses of Parliament.

By *Charles Gataker*, Rector of *Hoggeston* in the County of *Bucks*.

Μητρὶς ἐμὴν ἐστὶ τὸ θεοτελεῖας τὸ νομοθετεῖν, Hierocles in *Pyth. Carm. Aur.*

L O N D O N ;

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ANIMADVERSIONS ON THE CASE OF THE QUAKERS,

*Concerning Oaths and Swearing ;
Propounded by them to the Consideration of the King,
and both Houses of Parliament, A. D. 1673.*

SECTION I.

The Design of this Treatise.



It is not mine intention, to examine the Truth of many Assertions boldly affirm'd by these Men, without any proof, or shew of probability, but not without an evidence of Pride and Vain-glory, nor to inquire into the sincerity and pertinency of all the Examples and Testimonies annexed to their frame of their Case, which can only dazle the Eyes, or amuse the Minds of vulgar Readers. But my design is, out of the Love which I owe to Truth and Peace, both which can never be so well preserv'd, as by the Holy and Wise Gods Ordinances for their security, to assert (with as much brevity and perspicuity, as I can well use) the warrantable use of Oaths under the Gos-

Zech. 8.
19.

pel, when Christians do, upon a just occasion, *Swear by the True and Living God in Truth, in Judgment, and in Righteousness*; notwithstanding *Christs* inhibition (in his Sermon on the Mount) that the *Jews*, then his Auditors, should not swear at all by the *Creatures*, nor by *God himself* in ordinary communication; and also to defend the Authority of our Lawful Superiors, to require an Oath from them, who are subject to their Government, be it Civil, or Ecclesiastical. Now because these subverters of Government, do invite (or rather provoke) the whole Nation to consider their *Case*, that they may gain pity to themselves from the Common People, and Protection from the Powers ordain'd of *God*, even in their disorderly ways of singularity, wherein they villify Authority, and disturb that peace of Conscience, with which good Christians do approve themselves, to be faithful Subjects both to *Christ*, and his Vicegerents on Earth, I shall endeavor to discover, not only the defects, but also the frauds of these new *Casuits* in stating of the Question; and then proceed to unfold the Nature of an Oath, in order to the right stating of the Question in hand, viz. *Whether, an Oath of God, or of the Lord, (as the Holy Ghost speaks) be consistent, or repugnant, with or to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.* And lastly I shall reconcile sober, deliberate, and reverent swearing unto Christian Religion, still proceeding upon those Principles, and Maxims which are avowed by all, who are indeed, the *Disciples of Christ*, taught of *God* by his holy Spirit and Word, which in Religion, deriv'd from Heaven by Revelation, are never to be severed, since the holy Scriptures are by *Gods* gracious providence employed, and by his Blessing are sufficient to make us wise unto Salvation. And in this undertaking I do earnestly beseech the only wise *God*, who is the *Father of Lights*, and free-flowing Fountain of Wisdom, to direct and assist me in the lighting of my Candle at his written Word, and in drawing the Waters of Life, out of that never failing Well of Salvation.

S E C T. II.

The Pretence of the Quakers.

THis late upstart Generation, raised up by the Lord, as they boast, (and we will acknowledge it to be true in some sence, as *God* says he raised up *Pharoah*, first to be a Destroyer, and then to be Destroyed)

stroyed) complains that for 20 or 30 years last past, under the various Revolutions of Government, although they have been of a peaceable behaviour, (They say nothing of their refractory disobedience to Authority, in what hand soever) have been a suffering People only for refusal of Oaths; whereas they cannot swear at all, their Consciences not allowing them to do so, because of the express command of Christ, and out of obedience to the Doctrine of the Apostles. They alleadge, *Mat. 5. 33. 34. Jam 5. 12* from whence they conclude, that though Swearing were allowed in the Law, yet Christ and his Apostles forbid it in his Gospel. They dare, and do appeal to God the searcher of Hearts, (pray mark, how near this comes to an Oath, wherein every Swearer doth, as St. Paul did, call God to Record upon his Soul) that their refusing to swear, is with respect to the Reputation of Christianity, and the Evangelical dispensation of Truth and Righteousness, which exceed that of the Law and the solemn Oaths thereof, and to the express Prohibition in the Case. This is the summe of their Case, and the ground of their Request, to be eased of the heavy burden, and to be deliver'd of the Snare of Oaths. 2 Cor. 1. 23.

S E C T. III.

An Examination of this Pretence for Refusal of Oaths.

I Shall not now make inquiry, whether all the Imprisonments and Sufferings of Quakers, have been only for their refusing of Oaths exacted of them by Magistrates. But my business is to examine, whether their pretence of Conscience be allowable in this Case, to exempt them from being prest to Swear, or to secure them from the guilt of disobedience, in their obstinate refusal of all Oaths whatsoever. Here, first I must lay open two things in this Discourse, to wit, the foul Hypocrisie, and the false Doctrine of these Quakers, in the ground-work of their perverseness. It is a matter of much consequence, to the right understanding of this serpentine breed, to compare their professions here, of respect to the Honor of Christianity, of obedience to Christs command, and the Doctrine of the Apostles, with their known.

known Principles and Practices, and to see whether there be an uniformity in them, and these Men bear an equal regard to all the Precepts of Christ, and his Apostles, as *David* had a respect to all Gods Commandments. For partiality in keeping one command with a nice scrupulosity, but breaking others with licentiousness, is a certain token of insincerity, and a pretence of Zeal, for one part of the Rule of Religion, when all the Rule beside is rejected, can be taken for no other, than diabolish dissimulation. Now let the Conversation of the Quakers, in relation to other parts of Christianity, be a little looked into, and you will quickly see, how little value, credit, or obedience, they defer to the precepts of Christ, and his Apostles. Do they not cast aside the Ordinances of Christ and his Apostles, for Worship and Government? Do they not avowedly refuse to give honor, to whom honor is commanded to be given as due? Do they not dissolve, or weaken those bonds of civil societies, which Christ by his Gospel hath tied streighter, than the Law of Nature did? Do they not violate Christian Charity, by Damning all that are not of their combination? To say nothing of their reviling all Ministers of the Gospel. Hath this Precept of not Swearing, swallowed up the whole Body of their Christian Religion? Or shall the observance of it pass current for universal, and uniform obedience, to the compleat Law of Liberty? Is not then something else in the bottome, besides the tenderness of the Reputation of Christianity? Let this be well thought on. But another thing is yet more remarkable. Who would not think, but that these hot Zealots for Christs Doctrine of the Gospel, who suffer such hard things, rather than break Christs Commandment, did make the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament, which Christ, and his Apostles, have, by practice and precept, commended to our study, for the confirming of our Faith, and the regulating our Lives, and those of the New Testament superadded to them, joyntly to be the Foundation on which we are built up to be that Temple, whereof Jesus Christ is the chief corner stone, or the compleat Rule of Faith, and Manners? For indeed without the Scriptures, now who can assuredly know what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect Will of God? And how came these Men to be acquainted with this very Doctrine of Christ, and his Apostles, but by the Scriptures? But after all this, you will find yo ur self much mistaken, if you imagine that these Men make the written Oracles of God, their principle of Religion, or Rule of Life. For the heads of them, in several Books, set up the Light of God

Psal. 119.
6.

Rom. 13.
7.

Jam. 1.
25.

Eph. 2.
19.

God within them, for the only infallible Rule, and they disparage the Holy Scriptures, which they allow to be, at the best, but a shadow of Gods will. Again their dissimulation of what they dare not deny, to be the Word and Will of God concerning Swearing, together with their impious despising of the same Holy Word, is apparently visible in their Sophistical conclusion, thus exprest with all the subtilty that the old Serpent could inspire into them, *So though it* (viz. Swearing) *was allowed in the Law*, (viz. of Moses which is opposed by them in the precedent sentence, and here to the Gospel) *Christ and his Apostles forbid it in his Gospel.*

Here is a double fallacy in the first Member of the conclusion. They would induce a conceit, that as Divorce was by God, and Moses, permitted to the Jews, to pass unpunished, for the hardness of their hearts, which yet was not approved by God, as good in it self, and therefore it is regulated by a Law for the security of the Woman, which Law doth but permit the divorce, but enjoyn the giving a Bill; so Swearing was but allowed barely with prescription of forms for Solemnity, and not commanded: Whereas Swearing by the Name of God was commanded, (which is devoted by the Fear of God in Scripture) as a solemn part of his Holy Worship, whereby Man gives God the Glory of his Sovereignty, Providence, Omnipresence, Omniscience, Omnipotence, Veracity, Justice and Equity. The Prophets also, who reached to the depth of the Law, which was * *Spiritual*, commanded Swearing under the Old Testament, and * foretold, in their Evangelical Sermons, that way of serving God and Christ under the dispensation of the New Covenant, when the Gentiles turn to the Lord, (mark the words of *Esaiah*,) which according to the Hebrew, run thus. *He that blesseth himself in the Earth, shall bless himself in God Amen*; (as we render it not amiss, but not to the full importance of the word, the God of Truth) and *he that Swareth in the Earth* (when it shall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea, in the new state of the Church, when God calls his Servants by another Name, *Esa. 65, 16, 17.* And what is that new and blessed name but Christians?) *Shall Swear by God Amen.* Christ himself expounds the word, when in his Heavenly Epistle to the Church of *Laodicea*, he takes to himself that glorious Title *Amen*. The true and faithful witness, who is invoked as a Witness and Judge of the Heart in every Oath made by his Name. It is not to be omitted, that the Oaths, which God commanded to be used in judicial proceedings, are enjoyned as fit means in their own nature,

Mat. 19.
8.

Mal. 2.
16.

Deut. 6.
13. & 10.
12. 20.

* Rom. 7.
14. Jer.

4. 2. &
12. 16.

* Esa. 19.
18. & 45.

23. & 65.
16.

Esa. 11. 9.

Apoc. 3.
14.

Heb. 6. 6. nature for the discovery of truth, and decision of controversies, which benefit and effect is common to all Nations in all Ages, who are imbrued with an apprehension, and fear of God; as Judge of the World. It is therefore an Imposture of these Wolves in Sheepskins, to attempt the persuasion that Swearing was only allowed, and not as expressly commanded in the Law, as these Dreamers Dream it to be forbidden in the Gospel.

Rom. 15. 4.
 2 Tim. 3. 15.
 1 Cor. 10. 11.
 Heb. 10. 1.
 Col. 2. 17.

Their second piece of juggling is this, that by their taking no notice of the practice of all Nations, not debauched into direct Atheisme; and of the constant practice of Gods best servants, who used Oaths for firm binding themselves and others in publick Confederacies, and private transactions, which were made between Gods servants on both sides, and also between the people of *Gado* on one side, and Idolatrous people on the other part, (of which proceedings, the Sacred History of the World, before the Law given by *Moses*, yields a full Harvest of Precedents) they divert us from looking after those things, which as *St. Paul* says, were before written for the instruction, conviction, reformation, teaching and admonition of us, upon whom the ends of the World are come, Therefore though *Jesus Christ* brought that *Grace and Truth*, whereof *Moses*, in the Ceremonial Law, by Gods wise contrivance, gave the Jews a *Shadow*, and that *Shadow* vanished, when the *Body of the Son of Righteousness* appeared above the *Horizon* of the Church, yet *Christ* in his Gospel did not diminish any thing of that natural Religion, the seeds whereof, God had once sown in the Hearts of all Mankind, for the keeping up the *Faith of his Providence*, and the fear of his *Judgement*, which are the two *Pillars of Justice*, without which, no civil society can firmly subsist.

I now proceed to animadvert the false Doctrine, either insinuated secretly by supposition, or expressed openly by profession.

First, It is falsely supposed, that the Law of *Moses* doth not in any part of it concern, or oblige us Christians. I shall hereafter shew that *Christs* prohibition of Swearing in familiar Discourse, and *St. James's* restraint of the Tongues outrage in passionate heates, is no forbidding of what the Law commands: But if the Law of Swearing oblige Christians, or be but a precedent to direct them, we must observe it, or at least may warrantably imitate it. The Ceremonial part of the Law, which concerned the *Typical Service* and *Sacrifices of the Temple*, ceased as to the design and Virtue of it, when *Christ* by his Gospel published the accomplishment of our Redemption,

tion wrought by his Death and Resurrection. The *Political Law* of *Moses*, which was peculiarly accommodated, in many particulars, to the seed of *Jacob*, called *Israel*, as they were, by Covenant, made God's Tenants of *Canaan*, ceased, when they ceased to be the *Politick People of God*. Both were openly abrogated, as to their exercise and practice by the utter devastation of the Holy City, with the Temple it self, by the dissolution of the Polity, by the ejection of the Nation out of their Land, and dispersion over the face of the Earth, in which state of exile, accompanied with bondage, they yet remain without King, Prince, Sacrifice, Image, Ephod, and Teraphim; that is, without any settled Form of Government, and without any means to serve, or to consult God, as formerly they had done. But for the *Law of Moses*, so far as it prescribes Offices, and exercises of Piety, Charity, Justice, Humanity, and Prudence; it obliges Christians, not upon the same account it did the Jews, to wit, as it was a part of the Covenant made in *Horeb*, but as it is a clear explication, and improvement of the Law of Nature, by deduction of particular Precepts, from general Principals of Religion, and Righteousness. Therefore *St. Paul* charges Christians with obedience to the Law, the second Table whereof he ingrafts into the Gospel. And (which is yet more considerable, to manifest our concernment in the Law) he establishes the liberal maintenance of the Ministers, not only upon the Ordinance of *Christ*, but also upon two *Laws of Moses*, according to the spiritual meaning of the one, and the Reason and Analogy of the other. And when we hear him speak thus, ver. 9. *Doth not also the Law say these things?* We must remember, that as *St. Paul* says elsewhere, *We know whatsoever things the Law speaks* (either for conviction, or for direction) *It speaks unto them that are under the Law*. We therefore who have and hear, by God's bounty, *Moses and the Prophets*, as well as *the Apostles*, are under the Law, not as a Covenant of Righteousness and Life by Works, (for in this respect, *We are not under the Law, but under the grace of the Gospel*) but as an obligatory Rule of obedience, to the Will of God, declared therein; therefore *St. James* calls the Law recorded by *Moses*, a *Perfect Law of Liberty*, the doing whereof must be added to the hearing, if we desire to be happy, *St. James* also calls it *The Royal Law*, one Commandment whereof being broken, the whole Golden Chain is broken, by which we must order our

Hof. 3. 4.

Rom. 13.

Eph. 6.
1. 2.1 Cor 9.
8. 14.Rom. 3.
19.Luk 16.
29.Rom. 6.
14.

Jam. 1.
25. & 2.
8. 12.

lives, and shall be judged. Now *St. James* knew, that the third Commandment running in the *Negative*, *Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain*, did include the *Affirmative* Precept of Swearing reverently, and keeping legitimate Oaths, which were Duties known well by the light of Nature, but reinforced upon the Jews by the Law, Now is it imaginable, that *St. James* the Apostle of the *Circumcision*, writing to the *Jews*, should so far forget himself, as after this high commendation of their Law, expressly prohibit what the Law enjoined, and by a total abolition of swearing, cancel the Third Commandment, as a thing that hath no further any place or use under the Gospel? This intolerable inconvenience is easily avoided, if according to the scope of the Apostles discourse, easily gathered from the Context, and considering, that impatience is the Parent of rash Oaths, we say, that *St. James* did very wisely joyn his inhibition of Swearing in heat and haste, upon the Sallies of Passion, to his exhortation unto patience; and yet he did not abolish the Third Commandment, nor banish Oaths out of Christendom. I confess I have unawares transgressed mine own limits, and expounded *St. James* before the method I prescribed to my self did require it; but I shall have the less to say hereafter. Indeed being engaged to shew how *St. James*, and indeed all the Apostles, do oblige Christians to their observance of, and obedience to the Law, in those Precepts which concern all Nations, who are by Christ set at liberty from the Judaical Yoke of Ceremonies and carnal Ordinances, amongst which, none was so mad yet, as to rank an Oath; I could not but observe the incongruity of the Apostles prohibition, as it is over-stretched by the Quakers, with his own honouring of the Law, and to prevent any scruple which might arise through misunderstanding of the Apostles restraint of us from swearing, by this distinction of imprudent and passionate Oaths, belched out in rage, from deliberate swearing upon weighty Causes, either arbitrarily, or out of obedience to Authority, but always with due reverence to God, I have open'd a way to reconcile *St. James* to himself, and the Law to the Gospel. And now I proceed,

Jam. 5.8.
12.

Secondly, To refute the dangerous errors of the Quakers, which they lay for a foundation of their abstinence from swearing. They affirm, the Righteousness of the Gospel exceeds that of the Law. This Assertion they maintain by the example of

one

one *Walter Brute*, who, (as *Mr. Fox* relates, in his *Martyrology*) defended his refusal of an Oath, because his Master *Christ* taught *Christian Men*, that in affirmation of a Truth, they should pass the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees of the Old Testament, or else he excludes them out of Heaven, *Matth. 5. 20.* To the words recited out of *Matth. 5. 33. 37.* *Walter Brute* subjoyned; Therefore as the perfection of the ancient Men of the Old Testament was, not to forswear themselves; so the perfection of *Christian Men*, is not to swear at all, because they are so commanded of *Christ*. But though *Walter Brute* was mistaken in the sense of *Christ's* Commandment, yet his words mount not to such an height of Error, as this position of the *Quakers*. For *W. B.* doth well note, that our Saviour says, our Righteousness must exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, but not that of the Law of *Moses*. And to the right understanding of *Christ's* Sermon in the Mount; we must take notice that *Christ* doth not unfold to his novice Disciples, the Mysteries of the Gospel; but first corrects the Jewish vulgar error of Happiness, consisting in the full enjoyment of the Temporal Blessings promised in the Law, and prepares them for the Cross, to be suffered for Righteousness: and that they might not be deceived by a counterfeit or defective Righteousness, he establishes the Law, and the Prophets, to be the Rule of Righteousness, and then proceeds to clear and vindicate the Law of *Moses* from the corrupt Glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees, whose new Model of Righteousness was so defective, that our Saviour said plainly, and severely; that except your Righteousness exceed beyond that of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; that is, ye cannot be Subjects of the Kingdom of the *Messiah*, which now ye long to see. Mark that *Christ* spake then to the Jews, who were carried away with a reverence and esteem of the Scribes and Pharisees, who partly enervated, partly made void the Law of *Moses*, by their new Traditions, and false Interpretations. *Christ* recovers the Law of *Moses*, as it was expounded by the Prophets, who preferred a Spiritual Obedience, and sincere Righteousness, and charitable Mercy before Sacrifices, from noval corruptions, and recommends it, explain'd by himself, to them, who delighted to be counted the Disciples of *Moses*. He propounds no superabundant Righteousness beyond the Law, which cannot be exceeded in a title. For there is nothing imaginable in the way of Righteousness

Math. 5. 20.

Righteousness, (as it imports a conformity of Man's Will unto God's Will) beyond the *loving of God with all the Heart, Soul, Understanding, and Strength, and the loving of our Neighbor as our self,* on which two Commandments all the Law and the Prophets do depend. These, Christ came neither to make void, nor to improve by any new Precept of Righteousness. The *Righteousness of God by Faith*, which is now fully and clearly revealed in the Gospel, is another thing, far different from the *inherent and active Righteousness*, which Christ in his Sermon so earnestly recommends to his new-come Auditors. The conceit that Christ made up the defects of the Law, and laid a yoke of more exact Righteousness upon Christians, than Moses laid upon the Jews ; (yet Papists say, we may take up, or refuse at pleasure, because all these pretended additions (which we may find as easily in the Old Testament, as in the New) are not Commandments, but Counsels,) hath bred many pernicious errors and practises in the Church. The Popish way of taking Christ's *additional Ordinances* (as they conceive) for *Counsels* leading to a state of Perfection above common Christians, hath begot the Doctrine of *Works of Supererogation, of Merit, of Monks*, and all the Superstitions and Frauds, depending upon them. The Phanatick way of false expounding Christ's *interpretations* of the Old Law, for *New Precepts* obliging all Christians, hath put *Anabaptists* and others upon the conceit, that the use of the Sword in the Magistrates hand, and in the Soldiers, and also Swearing, is altogether inconsistent with Christianity. But let it be considered, whether it is likely that Christ would engage his raw Disciples to break the Law of *Moses*, and in a refractory manner to disobey their Magistrates by refusal of Oaths, which might be exacted of them almost every day. Certainly if his Doctrine had been such, and any number of his Disciples, had been obedient to his new Law ; his adversaries who took much pain to little purpose, in suborning witnesses against Christ, might, with ease, have found ground enough of accusation, and plenty of Witnesses, who heard and practised his Doctrine, or, in their Courts, saw it observed : (if Christ's words had been taken at that time in the same sense as the Quakers do now) to have overwhelmed our Saviour with the charge of abrogating *Moses's* Law.

Lastly, is it imaginable, that Christ our Blessed Lord and Master would so pervertate, as not to observe, and practise, what

what he taught and preached to his Disciples? But our Blessed Saviour, whom these Seducers affirm to have forbidden Swearing in a Court, at the Command of a Magistrate, and to have made this abstinence from Oaths a degree of Perfection above the Righteousness of the Law, did, himself, at the great Council at *Hiernsalem*, after long and strange silence, give an answer to the High Priest, being required to speak upon his Oath; and he submitted to the High Priest's adjuration, by confessing himself to be Christ. The High Priest (as if he would use a *Spiritual Rack*, to extort a confession from his silent Prisoner) said; *I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.* The form of the Oath is pronounced by the Judge himself, with the Matter inquired for. Our Saviour's answer of assent, is a taking of the Oath. Thus Christ did, and that he taught the contrary, is contrary to Reason, and to the sense of our Saviours Sermons, who therein secures the Law of *Moses* to a Tittle, and excludes from Heaven, any one that teaches the breach of the least Commandment in the Law. Surely if his Auditors had then understood their new Master to have abrogated all the Precepts of *Moses*, concerning Oaths in Judicature, especially, they would have accused him of contradicting himself, and of disparaging *Moses*, and of vilifying the Law of God, and in that humor would have deserted him. But it is evident that our Saviours Doctrine had a powerful Influence upon them another way, to raise their Wonder and Reverence of his Authority, above that of the Scribes and Pharisees.

But the knotty question is not yet untied. For it is said by many, If our Saviour did not *fill up* (as they expound *πληροῦσαι*) the Defects, or the Shortness of the Law, in points of Righteousness; why doth he oppose his sayings, to what was said of old in the Law, and settle a new Rule of Righteousness? Here lies the difficulty, which I pray God direct me to clear.

First, I say, that the common exposition of the word *πληροῦσαι*, by fulfilling, (as the Evangelist uses it, when he relates our Blessed Saviours Speech, wherewith he satisfied *John the Baptist*, concerning Baptizing his Master; *Thus it becometh us to fulfil all Righteousness*) is very pertinent and apposite, to the former member of the Sentence, as much as 'tis agreeable to the Truth. For Christ that came to destroy the works of the Devil, and to take away sin, which is the breach of the Law; by his Holy Life and

Doctrine, and by his expiatory Sacrifice; might truly and fully say, he came not to *destroy* the Law and the Prophets, but to *fulfil* them. And to reject this Sense of Christs words, without manifesting the incongruity of it, is an injurious dealing with Scripture. On the other side, the expounding of it *Filling up*, or *Supplying*, is supposed to be true, before it is proved; whereas it is not so agreeable to the opposition set between *destroy* and *supply*. Certainly, *Filling up by Addition* is not so directly opposite to the *destruction* of the Law and Prophets, as *Fulfilling* them is, which strengthens their Authority and Credit. But let these Men, who are so earnest for Christs improvement of the Law, by addition of more excellent Precepts of exact Purity, and heroic Patience, shew how he hath supplied the defects of the Prophets; since *Moses*, *David*, *Solomon*, and the Prophets, have in several places given the same Rules of Purity, Peace, Patience, &c. and the Apostles have enforced their exhortations to these Christian Vertues, by testimonies taken out of the Old Testament, as any one that is indifferently versed in the Apostolical Epistles will find.

Secondly, this pretended filling up of the Law, makes the new Doctrine of Christ, indeed to be the inserting a piece of a new and unwrought Cloth into an old Garment, which agrees not with it, but makes the rent worse. For if the superstructure, which these expositors build upon their fancied foundation, be true, Christ came to destroy the Law of *Moses* and the Prophets as insufficient for Christians, and for the Jews too at that time, by requiring a Righteousness more accurate, then they did. For if Christ forbid all Oaths, even those which *Moses* commanded, it unavoidably follows, that the great Prophet Christ untaught what *Moses* and the Prophets enjoined, and he dissolved their building, which is a strange way of perfecting, and Christ for his part, strongly disavows to have been the intent of his coming. The rub that lies in my way, is *Christs prohibition of Divorces, except in case of Adultery*; and the reduction of God's Ordinance of Marriage, to its primitive Unity, Purity, and Indissolubility, as our Saviour more largely elsewhere handles the case. It is besides my present purpose to enter upon another question, besides that of Oaths: I shall only say, that our Blessed Saviour intended a reformation of the Jewish Nation, corrupt by custom, and the restitution of Marriage, throughout all Christendom, to its Integrity, and Dignity; and to prefer God's *Primitive Ordinance*

Mat. 9.
6.

Mat. 9.
2.

Mat. 16.
6.

Ordinance, before a *political Law*, attempted by a wise and a Gracious Law-giver, to the humour of an ill-natured people. And yet here is nothing new, or more perfect than what was delivered in the Law and the Prophets. For Christ proves his Doctrine of Marriage out of *Moses*.

The severe Law of *Retaliation* which God made, that he might, by terror, prevent the first injury; and not that he might encourage the last of Revenge, is no more repealed by Christ, than by *Solomon*, *Prov.* 20. 22. and 24. 29. But it sounds harshly, when a Man says, This Law is *filled up* by Christ, when he *dissuades the use of the Law*. By the way take notice, that many Political Laws were wisely contrived, and provided, by God, for the Jewish People, as fit remedies of many evils emergent by the naughty disposition of a froward Generation, which Provisions were left to the liberty of the offended Party to make use of. Now Christs prudential admonitions of the Jews, not to fly to those Remedies, are no abrogations of those Laws. But I have said enough of Christs preserving reverence, and enjoying obedience to that original Rule of Righteousness, given to Mankind, which was antienter than the Law, given in Mount *Sinai*, and is set down and explain'd in the Law, and in the Prophets, which compleat the Body of the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament, which God hath thought expedient to preserve, for the benefit of his Church Universal of all Nations.

Finally, to solve the whole objection, the Adversaries and their Doctrine, against which, Christ bends his Discourse, are to be enquired for, and discovered. Christ, before he delivered his own Sense and Saying, premises this to his present Auditors, *Ye have heard, that it was said to, or by them of old time, &c.* *Mal.* 5. Or, *Ye have heard that it hath been said, &c.* Or barely, *It hath been said.* Now that which was said to them of old time (*viz.* to the Ancestors of the Jews, that either heard God himself, or *Moses* and the Prophets) which is recited and interpreted by our Saviour, is either some words of the Decalogue, *viz.* the 6. 7, and 3 Commandments; or else some Precepts in the Law, as those concerning Divorce, Retaliation, Love and Hatred; but of whom did that people hear it? without doubt, of the *Scribes and Pharisees*, whose form of Righteousness Christ taxes for defectiveness, and whom elsewhere he sharply reproves for *Blind Guides*, yet active and cunning Seducers; and of whose sower but spreading

Matt. 23

Mal. 5.

21.

27. 23.

ver. 38.

43.

ver. 31.

Matt. 23

13, &

and 16.

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ing Leaven of false Doctrine, he warns his Disciples to beware, But did they hear all that God said to them of old time, and nothing else? Did these popular *Rabbies* preach the word of God intirely, and sincerely, without addition, mutilation, corruption, and adulterating, by vain traditions of Men, and by fraudulent glosses? No such matter; this is confessed, and without controversy, that those soothing Preachers insisted on the Letter of the Law, and to gratify the corrupt affections of their Clients and Scholars, who looked on them, as bearing the Keys of Knowledge, and uncontrollable interpreters of the Law, and rewarded them accordingly; perswaded them, that an external obedience, or abstinence from Adultery, Murder, Perjury, was a full satisfaction to the Law, and this *patch of innocency* was an *entire raiment of Righteousness*. Further, They gave all the indulgence to the Peoples passions of Lust and Revenge, which the polittick Law did not reach at to punish. In the mean time they neglected all the Sermons of the Prophets, who were, by their Office, Interpreters of the Law, and Preachers of Repentance, and did constantly require the cleanness of the Heart; Truth in the inward Man, and Regularity in their Affections. Now our Saviour Christ reflects upon the Impostors, and their corrupt comments upon the Law of God, when he expounds the several Commandments: He makes no distinction of Perfections (as *W. Brute* misconceived) as if there were one perfection of the Men of the Old Testament, and another of Christian Men. A sincere endeavour to be Holy, and Merciful, as God our Heavenly Father is, and shews himself to be our pattern, is the Perfection common to both Jew and Gentile, that follow after the Righteousness of God's prescription. That which *W. Brute*, and these Quakers that follow him, call *The perfection of the Ancient Jews*, Not to forswear themselves, is but the partial, clipt, and counterfeit Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, expounding the 3 Commandment by halves; *Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain*; that is, said they, *Thou shalt not swear falsely, nor break thy Oath*, whereas they never counted rash and vain Oaths to be a breach of this Commandment, worthy their reproof. And that which they call *the perfection of Christian Men not to swear at all*, is indeed a corruption of Religion, by depriving God of his Honour and Worship, and a great Defect introduced into the publick Institutions of Justice, by debarring Christian States of a very serviceable Ordinance of God.

God. The reason of mine Assertion is this ; As Christ in expounding the sixth and seventh Commandment, the force of which he extends to the restraint of the Eye, Heart, and Affections, as well as to the Members of the Body, opposes nothing but what the Pharisees indulged; In like manner, in dealing with the third Commandment, Christ forbids not what the Law (which he himself, being the *Word* of God, did give unto *Moses*, and by his hand, unto the People) did Command, and Establish, but that sinful swearing in ordinary communication, which being grown customary (peradventure with the Leaders, as well as the following people) these *Masters in Israel* connived at, who sought their own Glory and Profit, and never seriously considered the honour of God, which Christ sought to advance, in all that he did and taught. And now I hope I have evinced, that Christ did not set up a *new, and more perfect rule of Righteousness*, than what of old was given by God, and that he hath cleared it from the corruption, and restored it to its integrity, from the defalcation of the Scribes, and Pharisees, without addition, or detraction; and without crossing or abolishing his own Law, concerning reverent swearing by the Name of God. I do not think it needful, to take notice now of the fond and senseless Traditions of the Pharisees, concerning the binding force of Oaths, which varied with them, according to the several forms of them, as they were expressive, either of the Name of God the Creator, or of the Creatures; and in the names of several Creatures, they deferred more Virtue to some than to others, though the preference be ridiculous, because unreasonable, as our Saviour hath Mal. 23 related, and censured them. Our Saviour in this Prohibition of 16. 22. Swearing, now under debate, appears clearly to have had a reflexive Eye upon some of their frivolous niceties. But these are besides the lines of the main matter in question, and may, without prejudice to the Cause, be past over without any further handling. It is high time now to conclude this Section.

SECTION IV.

Concerning the Nature of an Oath.

AN *Oath* being the subject Matter of the Controversy, the right understanding of it will conduce much to the stating, clearing, and determining the Question, concerning the consistency thereof with Christianity. I shall therefore explain the nature of an *Oath*, by a more resplendent *Light*, than that of the *Natural Conscience*, which yet is a Divine *Light*, and spark of *Piety*, which God in his *Wife* and *Holy Providence*, kept alive in the *World*, for the preservation of *Humane Society*, from our *Universal Confusion*. The *Holy Scripture* informs us abundantly, of the nature and use of *Swearing*, which is common to *God the Creator*, and the *Creatures* that bear the *Image of God*, both *Angels* and *Men*.

By the way; hence we may collect the absurdity of all them, who deny deliberate *Swearing*, upon weighty motives, as an *Imperfection*; whereas indeed, to swear in due manner, upon just grounds, is to be perfect in *Truth*, *Sincerity*, and *Constancy*, as our *Heavenly Father* is *Perfect*, and to make *Christians*, even before the *Resurrection*, in some measure equal to *Angels*. Now though there be a great difference between the *Oath* of the *Creator*; who because he hath none *Superior* or *Greater* than himself, swears by Himself, by his *Life*, by his *Holiness*, that is, his *incommunicable Majesty*, and the *Oath* of the *Creature*, who swears by *God* in the way of an *Appeal*, to a *Sovereign Lord*, who is both a sharp-sighted witness of *Truth*, and a severe avenger of *falsehood*; yet there is somewhat common to both; for which, in propriety of speech, *Swearing* is, by the *Holy Ghost*, attributed, to both; I do therefore describe an *Oath* in general to be the binding ones self immutably, to speak and act according to *Truth* and *Faithfulness*. *St. Paul* leads me to this description, by saying, that *God willing to shew more abundantly the unchangeableness of his Counsel*, to the *Heirs of the Promise*, confirmed it by the interposition of an *Oath*. All swearing, (as *Moses* teaches us) is binding the person, with a *Bond*, to be constant and true to his word that goes out of his mouth. Now *God* is above the power

er of being bound by others, but yet may, and doth bind himself, by himself, and to himself primarily, and secondarily, by a gracious condescension to his *Creatures*. But Man who is subject to the power of others, may not onely bind himself, of his own accord, by an Oath, but may also, and sometimes ought to suffer this sacred Bond to be imposed on him, and to put it on himself. For persons under the *Authority* of *Magistrates*, *Parents*, *Masters*, are bound by the express *Law* of God, to take such Oaths, which, upon just grounds, are exacted of them; and those of equal quality may, by God's *Warrant*, bind themselves each to other, by interchangeable Oaths. It is superfluous now to recite at large all the examples of these obligations recorded in Scripture, which frequently occur to the Reader, and are set up by God as *Pillars* for the direction of Travellers, or (to use *Psalm* 119. *David's* words) are designed to be a *Light* to our Feet, and a *Lantern* to our Paths. But the Swearer, whether by his own motion, or at the command, or intreaty of another, ought to bind himself to nothing, but what is agreeable to Goodness and Justice. God, the Fountain and Measure of Goodness and Justice, can do no other; And Man made, at first, in the likeness of God, ought to do no other. Therefore the two celebrated *Axiomes* of Divines, which depend one on the other, are true and fixed Rules of Conscience. 1. An Oath ought not to be made the Bond of Iniquity. 2. An Oath taken to that purpose, binds to nothing but Repentance.

Now that by which a person binds himself in swearing, is suitable to his own nature, or quality and condition. God, who is an independent Being, (as his Name, by which he revealed himself to *Moses*, imports, *I am that I am*, or more concisely, *I am*) binds himself by the very mention of, and reflexion upon his own *indefeasible*, and *invariable* Life and Holiness, who can equally neither Lye nor Dye; who is one, and changes not, and is incapable of variation, and engages himself, by his immutability, to constancy in his word. But Man, who is a Creature dependent, and obnoxious to God, his Sovereign Lord, Lawgiver, and Judge, binds himself over to the vengeance of God, if he fail in the Truth and Sincerity of his Swearing, by an open, or at least an imperfect invocation of God, to be first a witness to his Assertion, or Engagement, and then to be the Judge and Avenger, if he fail of Truth and Honesty in either. Furthermore, it is necessary for us, to the right understanding of God's Swearing,

Swearing, to observe, what very many do not take notice of, or do not enough consider, and therefore set up their rest here, that God, when he takes an Oath, deals with Men after the manner of Men, out of a gracious condescension to Humane infirmity, that complying with Men's weakness, he may cure their infidelity with an *Oath*, as an *Antidote* against *Unbelief*, and a cordial strengthener of *Faith*. Now though there be *Truth* in this, and I will not say that this Doctrine is *unsound*, yet I will say, and prove, that it is too *short* or *narrow* an explication of the *mystery* of God's Swearing. For the Scripture informs us, that God hath sworn, not only to us who are mere Men, sometimes in *Mercy*, as to *Abraham*, and to his Seed, for the confirmation of his promises, and to *David* and others; and sometimes in *wrath*, as to the incredulous and murmuring Jews, to shew the irreversibility of that sentence, whereby they were excluded out of the promised Land, because they had forfeited their Title to it, by Infidelity; But God the Father hath also sworn to God his own Son, when he was designed to be made Man, and being invested with our Flesh, to be the Saviour of the World. Now the Eternal Son of God, being the *brightness of his Father's Glory*, was more excellently *Pure*, than the very *Angels*, who, although (as *Gregory Nazianz* speaks) they were ἀκλίστοια κατόπλεα Spotless mirrors of God's Holy Light in their original estate, yet were, as experience proved, by the ruine of some, capable of foul darkness, and therefore Christ stood not in need of such means, to preserve his fixed Purity, as we do to restore and secure our health, which depends upon our Faith on God's word. Yet God for other reasons did swear unto Christ,

l. 95. *Thou art a Priest for ever, after the Order of Melchisedeck.* It is impertinent to say, that God swore only for our assurance, and encouragement to rely upon the sufficient atonement of this *High Priest*, and for binding us to serve and obey *this King of Peace and Righteousness*. For by that Oath, as we do not swear *Faithy and Allegiance* to God or Christ, so God doth not swear to us, that Christ shall be a *Faithful High Priest*; but the Holy Scripture reveals the transaction which past in the *Court of Heaven*, for settling the *Mediatorship* upon Christ, how the Father swore unto his Son, *Thou art a Priest*, &c. And the Apostle gives us

b. 3. 18. some account of the matter; for from this Oath of God, in the constitution of the *Messiah*, to be King and Priest jointly, he infers the *Dignity of Jesus Christ's Priesthood*, above the *Levitical*, because

b. 1. 7. 25.

because these Priests were ordained without an Oath to a temporary, successive, and, at last, a transitory, and failing Priesthood, whereas, Christ, by an Oath, was consecrated to an unpassant and eternal Priesthood. Here is no shadow of imperfection in this grand affair of State, in the Kingdom of God, nor any appearance of God's condescension to humane infirmity in the business, but a manifestation of the Riches of God's wisdom, and Mercy, in the Divine Counsel, concerning the salvation of miserable mankind, by the Mediation, Propitiation, Intercession, and Redemption, of the Son of God incarnate, who is our King and Priest, and is by oath inaugurated into both. If this be duely weighed, we shall find that there is no reason to say, that Christ took away swearing from Christians, to advance them to a state of Perfection above the Jews. But this proud affectation of Phnaticks, to be above Oaths, surmounts the pride of Lucifer, in the Prophet Esay, who said, *I will exalt my Throne above the Stars of God; I will be like the most high.* For not contented with excelling the Angels in Heaven, who did swear by the living God, nor satisfied with being like unto God, they will be above swearing, that their single testimonies shall pass for creditable. This indeed, if it were obtained, would not be the perfection of Christian Religion, which Christ hath adopted to the condition of all Mankind, yet full of imperfections; but of these singularists, who would be above, as they are cross to, all the world, and above God himself, who is not above swearing, and counts it no disparagement to the Glory of his Truth. I will conclude this discourse with the Pious Meditation of Tertullian. *O nos felices, quorum causa jurat Deus, sed & miserrimos, si Deo juranti non credimus.* O how happy are we, for whose sake God himself doth swear? but oh the wretched misery of us, if we do not give credit to God, when he swears to win our belief. But because not Divine, but Humane Oaths are at present in question, their special nature is to be examined. Now Man's Oath is plenarily described by a very Learned Divine, to be an extraordinary part of Religious Worship, wherein God is solemnly called in to be a witness with us of the Truth and Sincerity of our speaking, upon the peril of his wrath, to be inflicted on us, if we deal not sincerely.

1. It is a part or act of God's worship, because it is not a bare naming of God, or making use of his name, as pious persons may often do, who yet may live many years without swearing, but it is an act of Religion, wherein the name of God

Esai. 14.
12, 13,
14.
Dan. 12.
7.
Apoc. 10.
5, 6.

Cicero
Offic. l. 3.
says an
Oath is
Affirma-
tio Reli-
gioſa.

Deut. 32.
40.
Ex. 17.
16.
Numb.
14. 30.
Deut. 6.
13.

God is taken up on purpose for his Honour, in the acknowledgement of his Presidency, over Humane affairs. Thus it agrees with *Adoration*, and was of old, accompanied with such *Ceremonies*, as import an *Adoration*, as *lifting up the hand to Heaven*, or *laying the hand on the Altar*, for which cause, the lifting up of the hand to Heaven, is ascribed to God, who is a Spirit, when his Swearing is intended to be exprest, It is such an eminent act of Religious Worship, that it is put sometimes for the whole Service of God.

1 Theff.
17.

2. It is an extraordinary piece of Worship, not of so frequent use as *Prayer* is, which is enjoined to be in a manner *uncessant*, but restrained to certain weighty occasions, so that it is more like *Physick* than *Food*. And for this cause Christ forbids it in ordinary communication: It is not the common language of a Christian, nor the embellishment of familiar discourses, but a Holy weapon to be taken up for the defence of Truth and Justice, when the security of either doth require it.

3. As to the special nature of this Religious Act, an Oath is an *Appeal* to God with a *Penalty*. It is first, an invocation of God, to bear witness with us. And so we acknowledge God to be, *videntem veri*, one that sees and knows the truth of the thing doubted of (for it is in vain to call in one for a witness, who knows nothing of the matter) and also a searcher of Secrets, a tryer of the Hearts, who knows our thoughts and intentions, and the conformity of our words to our Knowledge and Purposes; And then there goes a *curse upon our selves*, along with our *Prayer to God*. There is always an imprecation of Vengeance added to the invocation of God's testimony, in case we speak otherwise than we know, or intend. Herein we acknowledge God to be *Vindicem falsi*, a just and powerful Revenger of Falshood, Deceit, and particularly of our abuse of him, by drawing him down to countenance our lies and fraud. These things are so cleer, that I need not enlarge my Lecture upon the proof of them. But these evident Truths I lay now as the premises, out of which I shall anon draw my conclusion.

And that will the easier obtain credit, if to the nature of an Oath, we briefly recollect the *Ends*, *Uses*, and *Benefits* of an Oath, which are indeed too many to be particularly recounted, and unfolded at this time. The main ends of swearing are two, 1. The *Glory of God*, which naturally results from

from Man's serious acknowledgements of God's Sovereignty, and all those excellencies which are requisite to such a Witness and Judge, as we make our Appeal to, whensoever we swear in sobriety. 2. The good of others, or our selves, which we are bound to procure, and promote. For it is designed as a means, 1. To clear the Truth, and to preserve the Reputation of Men, charged unjustly. 2. To discover Crimes, that evil may be taken away from a Society. 3. To put an end to Controversies. 4. For the firmer binding of Contracts. In many cases, all other means of giving satisfaction to Magistrates, Friends, &c. may be ineffectual in matters of moment, where the requiring and taking of an Oath, may have a good effect to procure Quiet, Peace, and Justice. I need say no more; and what I have said, is warranted by the Law of God, and the good customs of the Nations, which are not only recorded, but approved by God in Scripture. It is therefore perversely done, by those Fanaticks, (whereof the Anabaptists are a part,) who do maintain, in shew at least, the Holy Scriptures to be a Rule of Faith and Life, and defend their Authority against the Quakers, to refuse deliberate Oaths, which are so frequently commanded, and commended in Scriptures; because Christ in one place, restrains Men from rash, light, and vain Oaths, which are very near a kin to perjury, and because one Apostle forbids hasty Swearing in fits of impatience, which make Men unfit, even for Prayer, much more for Swearing. For that St. James means no more, it is manifest, because another Apostle, who was led by the same Holy Spirit of Truth, (and that Spirit never contradicts himself) doth in his Divinely-inspired Epistles, pretty frequently make use of an Oath upon several weighty occasions, whereof one was the vindication of his own reputation, because the credit of his Apostleship, and the success of his Ministry, did, in a good measure, depend upon it. And the same Apostle St. Paul charges others by Oath, to perform their Duty, or what he thought expedient for the publick benefit of the Churches. See 1 Tim. 6. 13, 14. 1 Thess. 5. 27. This last instance, wherein St. Paul adjures the Christians of Thessalonica, is a parallel for Words, and for the power of imposing of an Oath, with the High Priest's adjuration of Christ himself before-mentioned. Let now the Anabaptists find a more commodious way of reconciling the Apostles in this

Heb. 6.

16.

Psal. 15.

1, 4. &

63. 11.

1 Tim. 2.

8.

2 Cor. 1.

23.

1 Cor.

15. 31.

Gal. 1.

20.

1 Thess.

2. 5. 10.

Rom. 9.

1.

this matter, if they can, than this, which we offer, saying, The Gospel of our Lord Jesus, preached by his Apostles, forbids temerarious swearing in anger, by Heaven, or Earth, or in any other form of an Oath, unto which Men were then accustomed, who were wont to express their Oath by a Creature, concealing, or sparing the name of God (for this is the true meaning of the words, *Nor any other Oath*, which these Men vainly urge for their cause) but at the same time the Gospel allows swearing by God, or by the Lord, upon grave and important occasions, with judgement; and also, charging inferiors, under an Oath, to do their Duty. But the Quakers are no less, if not more irrational, than the former; for they do not deny the Scriptures, which Jews for the Old Testament, and Christians for the Old and New Testament, acknowledge to be written by Divine Inspiration, to be *True*; but they fondly affirm, that nothing is the *Rule of Humane Life*, but the *Light of God within us*. We deny not the Light of God within us, to be the Director of us, but acknowledge that God, who commanded Light to shine out of Darkness, hath enlightened his House the Church, (which was larger, or lesser, as he saw good, to proportion the frame of it, under several dispensations of Grace) with his *Word*, both outwardly published, and inwardly applyed, and by both ways doth shine in our Hearts. And we further affirm, That since God hath committed his living and lightsome *Oracles* to *Writing*, and the Churches custody, as a *Standard*, whereby we may try the *Spirits*, whether they are of God, the *Father of Lights*; or of the *Prince of darkness*, who doth frequently transform himself into an *Angel of Light*, that he may with false Light delude and secure Men into his Kingdom of Darkness; nothing ought to be accepted, attended, and followed, as the Light of God within us, but what is agreeable to the Light of God without us, and shines in the *Candlestick*, that is the *Church*, which Christ hath set up to bear the Light.

2 Cor. 4.
6.

2 Cor.
11. 14.

To come closethen to the purpose, is it not a perverseness and giddiness of Spirit in these Men, to allow the Truth of the New Testament, which commends the Holy Scriptures of the Old, as directors of us in all those Duties to God and Man, which concern all Nations, whom God would have come to the knowledge of the Truth, and yet to condemn them who direct their actions, particularly in taking Oaths, by this Rule? Again, since the Light of
God

God within us, is, (as they acknowledge) *an infallible Rule*, and we, in Swearing deliberately, do follow that Light of God, which shined in the Hearts of all Nations, as well as of the Patriarchs, and of Gods Servants, both before, and after the separation of the Jews from the wide World, to be Gods chosen, and peculiar people, and of the Prophets, and of the Apostles, and the practice of these Men agreeable to Gods revealed word and will, shews that the Light of Conscience, which directed and moved the Nations to Swear, was no other than the Candle of the Lord; is it not a prodigious obstinancy in this froward Generation, not to entertain this light, but to condemn all those that do receive it and walk by it? Till then the Quakers can and do by some evidence, as clear, as that is for which we receive and submit unto the Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures, manifest that this pretended Light within them, which is directly opposite to the Light which hitherto hath enlightened all the World, which did not extinguish it by Atheism, or wink against it with wilful folly, is of God, we cannot but conclude, that the use of Oaths is still as warrantable, from the very Nature and benefit of them, as ever it was. And as the *superstitions*, which, though contrary to the *common Notions* of a God, and to the *natural principles* of Piety, yet by Satans malicious subtilty, and the vanity of Mans mind, are *ingrafted* upon the *stock* of natural Religion, do not extirpate the *root* of natural Religion, which will maintain true Piety to Gods Glory, when by good husbandry the corrupt grafts are cut off, and the root and branch are cultivated aright for the service of the true God; so the various abuses of Oaths, frequent in all Ages, with prophane despisers of God, and by vicious custom too general with Professors of Religion, do not in themselves directly, and should not, by consequence, eliminate the religious practice of Swearing. For the banishment of a *Sacrament*, as the Latines call an Oath, out of humane Society, is a step to supersede all Worship of God, and to remove an Oath out of all procedures of Judicature, is no little artifice to extinguish the fear of God in the World.

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SECT.

S E C T. V.

Concerning the summe and end of the Gospel.

That we may yet draw nearer to an end, and hit our Mark close and deep, it will be fit to consider the intimate and peculiar quality of the *Gospel*, to which these pretenders to Evangelical perfection say; that an Oath is irreconcilable. The *Gospel*, as it stands in opposition to the *Law of Works*, whereby Man was to seek Righteousness and Life by his own perfect obedience, is called by St. Paul, the *Law of Faith*, whereby Man being, by the general corruption of humane nature, and by his singular sinfulness, obnoxious to Gods wrath, which is the Messenger of Death, obtains Righteousness, and Life by Faith on Christs Blood. The Gospel then is a way of peace, a word of reconciliation, a ministry of Righteousness, Peace, and Life, which are purchased by the Death of Christ and by the Blood of his Cross.

The primary ends of the Gospel are these two inseparable benefits, which our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ hath compassed by his Death, and works, by the power of the Gospel, upon the Consciences of Believers; *Reconciliation*, and *Reformation* of Man, who was in a state of enmity with God, both active and passive, by his Sin. In one word, this is the *Reduction* of the *lost sheep*, or the *fugitive servant*, unto God, in the way of Peace and Holiness. The saving Grace therefore of the Gospel teaches all mankind, which is enlightened with its beams, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and piously in this present world. We are moreover to observe, that from the first foundation of a Church, which immediately was after Mans Sin, and Sentence, began to be built upon the promised *Messiah*, who is the *Rock of Salvation*. common to all Ages, God did set up a way of Worship, which had relation to Christ the *Lamb of God*, fore-designed by God, and manifested in Gods own season. This instituted Religion, in several *shadows*, drawn out by Gods hand, in such proportions, as he thought fit, contained the Salvation by Christ, and the Doctrine of Faith and Repentance, of which the *Law* given to Man, in his state of integrity, made no words, and gave no hopes of Salvation that way. The Gospel therefore first in the *cloudy Pillar*, which was the guide

of

of Patriarchs and Prophets, and then in the *brightness* of its *Revelation* by Christ, since all is accomplished and preached to the Nations, superadds to the *Law*, the *Righteousness of God from Faith to Faith*: but it pares off nothing of the Religion and Righteousness which Man owes to God, and to his Neighbour, by that natural dependence upon God, and that order to his neighbour, which God established by Creation of Mankind after his own Image, and of *one blood* to bind them together. This indeed is that which we call the *Law of Nature*, which God unfolded and taught the Patriarchs, the first Fathers of Families, and founders of humane Society. And the grace of the Gospel is so far from loosening the Bond of this Law; that on the contrary, by addition of the inestimable benefit of *Redemption* to our deep engagement by *Creation*, it ties more strictly the Redeemed of the Lord, who are enlarged from the bondage under Sin, and made the Servants of Righteousness, to yield up all their Members, once abused to the service of uncleanness and iniquity, to become now the servants and instruments of Righteousness unto sanctification. This then being the end and efficacy of the *Gospel*, to clear the light of the *Law of Nature*, and to strengthen the holy bonds of Love to God and Man, how is it imaginable, that the Tongue is restrained now by the Gospel, from being still made an instrument of Religion and Righteousness? Since the *Evangelical Prayer* of our Saviours framing for our use, is, that *Gods name should be hallowed* in all the World, can we think that silence, and total abstinence from taking up the name of God in an Oath, with reverence upon just occasions, sanctifies, or magnifies the Name of God? Or is it consonant to that enlargement of Gods honour, which is the effect of the Gospel, in regard of persons, and to the maintenance of it, by all acts of Piety, which our Saviour professes to have been his work and care, that Heathens and Infidels should still, by the Law of Nature, be bound to acknowledge, and honour the Name of God, by Swearing in a due manner; and Christians should have their hands tied from lifting up to Heaven, and their Tongues from calling upon his Name, and giving him the Glory due unto it? Indeed the Apostle says, what participation is there between righteousness and the transgression of the Law? what communion of Light with Darkness? or what agreement of Christ with *Belial*? Let it therefore first be proved, that an Oath is the transgression of the Law, before it be cast out of the *Kingdom of God*, as inconsistent with the *Righteousness*.

h. *self thereof*, which Christ commands us to *seek*. Let an Oath which is indeed a *Light* (according to the Apostles sentence) because it doth discover, and manifest sometime Truth, and sometime many shameful things which are done in secret, be proved to be an *unprofitable deed of Darkness*, or else let this light shine still in a Christian state. Let it first be proved, that the Man who suffers the *Lords anointed* to rule over him, and submits to authority in Swearing, is a *Child of Belial*, (that is, of the Devil, who is so called, for his impatience of a yoke, and therefore the refractory people, who would not submit to *Saul*, anointed by God, are stiled Children of *Belial*) is a *work of the Devil*, which Christ hath destroyed by his Gospel, or else there will be a good harmony still between *Christ's Gospel*, and a *Reverend Oath*.

S E C T. VI.

The Conclusive Arguments, to warrant the reverent use of Oaths among Christians.

THESE things being premised, not to preoccupate, but to expedite the decision of the Question concerning the consistency of Swearing, with the glorious Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, I shall now make their agreement evident by *all the Light of Nature, Law, and Gospel*, united in one body. To this purpose I will first prove, the *Divine Right and Power* of the *Magistrate* to *exact an Oath*, and with the same labour open a wide door for Christians to come into a *Court*, without pinching their Consciences, and bring them in with Christs Authority. And for private Oaths, they may have Christs good leave to use them, as well as *Jonathan* and *David* had Gods.

This Case of the Quakers is an *Axe* laid to the *root* of Magistracy, which fells down all Christian Magistrates, as Anti-Christian Tyrants, who, contrary to Christs command, bind themselves and their subjects by Oaths, and persecute all them who out of pure Conscience of Christs command, and for the honour of Christianity, refuse to renounce their Christian Faith, which they say cannot be avoided, if they take the Oath of Allegiance and Supremacy, or any other legitimate Oath. Indeed these seemingly tame people, are a brood of Vipers, like the *Adder* in *Jacobs Prophecick* character

character of *Dan*, which bites the heels of the Horse, and makes him throw his Rider: I spare the application, because it is obvious; But I will break the *Cockatrice Egg*, I mean this *Aphorisme* of *Esa. 59.* *Anarchy*, Christians ought not to Swear by the force of Christs prohibition. And to make the way plain for proceeding in my Method, I shall first inquire to whom the Sermon of our Saviour was Preached, and how it reached the present and future Auditors. This Sermon was not spoken to *Magistrates*, whether *Sovereign*, or *Subordinate*, but to the Multitude of the people, neither is there any part of it which relates to the Magistrates special duty; except that severe threatening, *Whoever breaks one of the least Commandments of Moses, and the Prophets (and certainly, Thou shalt Swear by the Lord, is one of them, and not the least) he shall be called, i.e. esteemed, and taken for the least in the Kingdom of Heaven,* be thought applicable to the *Magistrate*, as well as to the *Minister*. Those precepts therefore of *not resisting evil, and not judging* (which if they were given to Magistrates in their politick capacity, do overthrow Tribunals, and either disarm the powers ordained of God, or tye up the Sword, both Civil and Martial, in the scabbard) concern not Magistrates further, than as they are considered in an estate common with them to private persons, and are subject to the same duties. This is to be taken notice of the rather, because some pious Doctors of the ancient Church, who lived under Heathen and persecuting Emperors, and making no prospect into the latter times wherein *Kings*, according to several Prophecies, should *kiss the Son of God, and serve him with their Authority*, prove the *Guardians of both Tables of the Law, Defenders of the Faith, and Patrons of the Church*, did think Magistracy it self, and the use of the Sword, inconsistent with the Christian Faith; and it is no marvel, if some of latter times were tender of Swearing, who mistook the Subject and Scope of our Saviours discourse. But we must know that our *Saviour* who was *born a King*, but of such a *Kingdom* as is not of this *World*, was very solicitous to decline any thing that favoured of *Worldly power*, and was as cautious in his Sermons, of reflecting upon Princes, and very careful to secure the Authority of the *Magistrate*, in his whole conversation, and also in his Gospel. For his design being the Salvation of all sorts of Men, of all Nations indifferently by the Preaching of the Gospel, he did insert nothing into it, which might rationally obstruct the entertainment of it, and especially nothing prejudicial to the power of *Princes*, whereof they are jealously tender, that they might

Ma. 5.

19.

Ma. 5.

37. & 7.

11.

Psa. 2.

11. 12.

& 72. 11.

& 138. 4.

Esa. 43.

23. & 62.

3.

Mat. 23.

Joh. 18.

36.

Luc. 12.

13. 14.

Joh. 8. 3.

— 11.

might have a just aversion from the Faith: The Ancient Church therefore sung this true and good Anthem, unto the Honour of Christ, *Qui regna das caelestia, non eripis terrestria*;

*Thou that givest the Heavenly Crown,
Cassest not Earthly Kingdoms down.*

Indeed Christ took the *World* as he found it, and altered nothing in the *secular* estate of Kings, or Subjects, but by vertue of his Heavenly power in a spiritual way, by his word and spirit, established *light* instead of *darkness*, *knowledge*, and the *fear of the true God* instead of *ignorance*, and *impiety*, *faith*, in himself, instead of *Paganism*, and *holiness* of heart and life, instead of *visionsness* in his new erected Kingdom, the subjects whereof continued in the same outward estate, wherein they were called, whether bond or free, Subjects or Governors. As the grace which came by Jesus Christ, entitled no Man to *Wealth* or *Power*, to which a believer had no right and title before, by the *Law of Nations*, and of his own Government, under which he lived; so

* Pauls Heavenly πολίτευμα (Phil. 3. 20.) whereby he was a Citizen of *Jerusalem*, that is, above the City of the Living God, (Heb. 12. 22.) did not extinguish his πατρίαν, his being a Citizen of *Rome*, which was his Birth-right, and that a precious Privilege; neither did the former hinder the Apostle from claiming the benefit of it, and making advantage of it. See Act. 22. 25 --- 29. & Act. 16. 37. 38. 39.

it * *devested* not, nor *disinherited* any of *honour* or *estate*, nor *abridged* any *secular liberty*, nor *retrenched* any *publick Authority*, which the Ministers of Gods Providence were entrusted with, for the publick good. If it did, let that Scripture of the New Testament be produced. But none such ever was, or can be alleadged. Yea many, indeed too many to be repeated now, are obvious in the Apostolical

Writings, which manifest the contrary. Furthermore, as the *truth* of the Gospel crost no *truth*, either evident by the *light of Natural Reason*, or revealed by the *word of God written*; so the Grace of Christ loosened no *bonds* of the *Law of Nature*, nor of the *Laws of Nations*, which were agreeable to *natural Justice* and *humanity*, but binds Christians by *new bonds* of *peace* in *obedience* to *Magistrates*, *Parents*, and *Masters*, although they be harsh and froward. And now I come to mine Argument, which I shall frame out of these Propositions.

1. The *Sovereign Magistrate*, and those who are sent by him, according to the *Evangelical Doctrine*, have received in their *Divine Ordination*, a power to use all means, that either by Gods appointment are, or in *common prudence* seem, to the *Wisdom* of the State, directly

directly conducive to the preservation of the Peace, and promotion of Righteousness, and for punishment of Offenders: all which indeed is the *publick good*, and for the procuring whereof, God hath armed his *Deputies* with a *Sword*, or a *coercive power*, that the *fear* or the *feeling* of it, may constrain Men to obedience. All this is written with a *Sun-beam* in the New Testament. See *Joh. 19. 11. Rom. 13. 1. &c.* And it is further confirmed, by what I have already produced to shew, that the Gospel takes no *flower* out of the *Crowns* of *Kings*, though they were *infidels*, much less if they be *faithful*. For if *St. Paul's* Logick be good, that *Servants* being made Christians ought the rather to *serve* their *Masters* being converted, because they are *believers*, and *beloved*; we may by proportion conclude, that the Magistrates *embracement* of the *Christian Faith*, doth not *impair* his *Authority*, and ought not to diminish the Subjects *inclination* to *serve* and *obey*, and is an *indeciment* of the King to his *People*. 1 Tim. 6.

2. An Oath seasonably administred, and duely taken, is a fit means to preserve Peace, by a firm obligation of Subjects to their Sovereign, (whereof we have an example, *2 Kings 11. 17.*) and to secure and promote Justice, and to carry on judicial proceedings, in discovery of right and wrong, and in conviction of Offenders. To prove this, I need say no more, than advise any doubter, to look upon the judgment and practice of all polished Nations under the Sun, since the Foundations of Kingdomes and Republicks in the World. And if all that be counted but a general *corruption* of *reason*, like the general Idolatry of the Nations estranged from God, let him remember, that the use and force of Oaths, is founded upon no other basis, but the hearty Faith and sincere fear of Gods power and vengeance. But I shall drive the Nail to the Head by Gods own Sentence, who established Swearing in his own government, as a means proper to produce the effects aforesaid, and tells the Jews for their credit, that their *political Laws* did exceed those of all Nations, for *Wisdom* and *Righteousness*. Now the use of Oaths is an ingredient of very many Laws in the Government. Deut. 4. 5. - 8.

3. The Magistrate who stands accomptable to Christ, who is *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*, for the exercise of his power, in order to the ends of Government, may and ought to require Oaths of the Subject, as the occasions, *viz.* of securing the Kings Life and Honour, the preservation of the publick Weal and Peace, the ending of Controversies, and the execution of Justice, or the like. Apoc. 19. 16.

like, do require. Otherwise, he will hardly be able to clear himself of imprudence, or of remissness, in refusing the choice and use of such means, as God himself hath approved, and appointed in the course of Government. I think I may now upon these premises, safely and rationally infer.

Ergo the Magistrate according to the Gospel, may put his Subject, of what Religion soever, to his Oath to Swear by the true God. I wave the Question of requiring Jews, and Infidels to Swear upon the Gospel, that it is by Jesus Christ, whom we confess to be the true God, but they do not own as such.

I have now sufficiently proved, (as I think, and hope that all who are both rational and impartial will apprehend) that the Gospel of Christ doth not infringe, but confirm that power that Magistrates injoy'd by the *Law of Nature*, that is to say, by *Gods general ordination of humane Society throughout the World*) and the Kings of Gods special anoyntment, and appointment over his people, were endow'd with by his Statutes, to tender Oaths to their Subjects, and to require their obedience in taking them, supposing still that the use of them be referr'd to their proper ends. I have now but little to do farther for the proof, that the same Gospel binds Christians to take such Oathes as are administred to them by their *lawful Superiours*. For God both in the way of *Nature*, and also in the course of *Grace*, doth nothing in vain; (and as *St. Paul* says expressly,) *Gods Minister doth not carry a Sword in vain*, and is as much bound to draw it for the defence of Gods honour, which is concerned in Swearing, as the *servants* of *Secular Kings*, are obliged to fight for the Life or Honour of their *Master*; which rule of Wordly State, Christ hath consecrated by his Sentence. But the Magistrates power is rendered vain and ineffectual, if the subject can elude his Authority, and resolve his commands into such wind as shakes no Corn, by his obstinate refusal to swear. I shall therefore urge but one Argument to satisfy the Subjects Conscience in this case.

The Gospel of Christ, taught by the Apostles to all Nations, lays, upon all Christians, a necessity of submission, and obedience, with a readiness to every good work, unto the supereminent powers and principalities of the World, and to the Administrators of Government commissioned by them, not only for Wrath, (and yet that terror arising from the apprehension of the Sword that glitters in the Magistrates hand is justified by *St. Paul*) but also out of Conscience, (Quakers, mark that, to wit, Conscience binds to no things but obedience, in this case rightly stated) or reverence of *Christ*, by whom

See an
example
of an
Oath im-
posed by
Solomon,
1 King
2. 42.
Rom. 13.
4.

Joh. 18.
36.

Rom. 13.
1-7.
Tit. 3. 1.
1 Pet. 2.
13.
14. 17.

whom Kings Reign, and Princes Decree Justice. And this universal obedience, like that which Children owe to their Parents, is limited but by one Rule, obey in all things in the Lord. It reaches to things indifferent, as the obedience of the Rechabites did, which God commended and rewarded with a Blessing. But Obedience to our Superiours in those things, which are so far from being evidently repugnant to the Will and Command of the Lord, that they are consonant to the express Word of God, and agreeable to his Ordinances, is an Evangelical Duty unavoidable upon any pretence whatsoever, where there is a possibility of performance.

If you consult the Allegations out of St. Paul and St. Peter, and confer them together, the perspicuity of the words will not permit you to doubt of the truth of this Proposition.

But Swearing in the manner aforesaid, when it is exacted by a lawful Superior, is a good Work done in the Name of the Lord, as I have abundantly proved already. Therefore some Swearing is not only consistent with Christianity, but also required by the Gospel.

It remains only for me to show, for the direction and satisfaction of Christians in several cases of a more private concernment, that Oaths taken or given, without the interposition of the Magistrates Authority, either upon a single persons own Motion of Spirit, impelled thereto by weighty considerations, or out of compliance with a Neighbour, are not repugnant, but agreeable to the Rules of the Gospel. Here I shall, for brevities sake, produce but one argument, which hath *Light* and *Strength* enough to prove my conclusion, and may lead the Reader to frame more by proportion out of the Gospel; if he please, for the fuller Conviction of the Adversary, to stop his Mouth with number, if weight will not bear down his reason. The Gospel doth always allow, and as the importance of the matter requires, commands Christians to do whatsoever doth directly, and by the nature of the act it self, tend to the Glory of God, which ought to be the aim which we intend in all our deliberate actions: and in like manner to perform freely whatsoever really conduces to the good, peace, and welfare of our Neighbor, whom we are bound to love, as our selves, by the Law and Gospel.

But the due Swearing in many things that concern our selves, or for the satisfaction of our Brother; or for a mutual engagement to do what is agreeable to Piety, Justice, and Charity, doth bring Glory to the Name of God, and procures the good of our selves

Prov. 8.

15.

Eph. 6.1

Jer. 35.8

9.

10. 18.

19.

1 Cor.

10. 21.

1 Pet. 4.

11.

Rom. 13.

2. 3.

1 Cor.

10. 24.

Phil. 2. 40.

and others; And therefore is not by the Gospel wholly banished out of the conversation of Christians.

The Assumption is manifestly true. For it is apparent to sense and reason, that when a Christian calls God to witness, regard, judge, and revenge falsehood upon the Head and Soul of perjur'd persons, he sets forth the Glory of God, as much as *Jacob* and *Laban*, or *Jonathan* and *David*, or any of the former days before or under the Law did. And common experience teaches us, what satisfaction and benefit, we mutually give and receive by an Oath reverently taken. The conclusion therefore naturally flows from the premises, and abides firm as built upon a Rock, that Christianity hath not made the Third Commandment a mere insignificant or useless Cypher to us, by forbidding Oaths, which leaves no place for the honouring of Gods Name that way, and stops up the passage against Piety and Impiety both together.

I confess, that a great measure of *Christian Prudence* is requisite in the private use of *Oaths*, above what is needful in *Oaths* administered by authority. For our submission to the wisdom of the State enjoyed us by God, absolves us from much of the trouble and care about the sufficient weight in the ground of the Oath; whereas now the whole burden of the Oath, with all the circumstances to qualify and legitimate the same, lies upon the discretion of the private Christian, who ought to have a full assurance in his own Mind, of the warrantableness of the action. Therefore the sparing use of private Oaths is safe, commendable, and comfortable. For according to St. Pauls golden rule. *All things that are lawful for us, are not always expedient, neither do they always edifie.* And Christs precept of abstinence from Swearing in ordinary discourse, doth, in a manner, restrain his Warrant concerning Oaths, to matters not only serious, but also weighty, which need such an inforcement of belief, or engagement. Being now arrived at this conclusion, I will imitate my Adversaries a little, and quote the Testimony of a Heathen, who was beholden to the Gospel for his refined Morality, but a profest Enemy to Christ. *Hierocles*,

† By the way, we may observe, that it was a cunning Stratagem of Satan in that age, that he might yet support his sinking Kingdom, to revive and set up the *Pythagorean* and *Platonick* Philosophy, the Morality whereof they improved, not without borrowing Light from the Christian Religion. But the Devils design was, by Philosophy to baffle Faith, and to discountenance Christianity, as being, at the best, but useless, which could do no more to advance Vertue, than Paganism itself. This is evident by the Writings of *Porphyrus*, *Jamblichus*, *Hierocles*, and the like.

cept,

cept, *ἡ δὲ ὁρκία*, Reverence an Oath, discourses thus, as I shall render his sense faithfully, without transcribing the Greek. He calls an humane Oath, the Image of Gods Oath, whereby God establisheth the immutable Law and order of the Universe, the helper of humane affairs, and Procurator of constancy and truth; which reduces the versatile free will, into order and affixedness, both in words and deeds. The Reverence of an Oath, is the keeping of what is Sworn to, as much as in us lies, without violation, which by a voluntary necessity, trimmes them that reverence an Oath, to the constancy and truth of a Divine Habit or Constitution. None but they who are possess'd with political Virtues, can swear aright. * Naughtiness or viciousness is the Mother of false or forswearing. How is it possible, that a covetous, voluptuous, or cowardly person, should ever do other, then put off the reverence of an Oath, and when ever he imagins that some advantage may be reaped by Perjury, barter away Divine Goods, for those which are mortal and fading? Now the best course of care to preserve the reverence of an Oath, is not to use it frequently, nor at adventure, nor upon light occurrents, nor for the filling up of talk, nor for the giving credit to a relation; but as far as it is possible, to reserve the use of it for things that are equally necessary and precious; and them only when their Security appears not any other way to be procured, but by the truth issuing from an Oath. And then our Oaths will gain credit, when our whole conversation bears harmony with it, to show, that, in humane matters, nothing is more precious with us, than Truth, whether we be unsworn, or swear. Now this precept charges us not only to Swear aright, but also to abstain from Oaths. For so we shall alwayes swear aright, if we do not * abuse Oaths, or rather take our full liberty of Swearing. For also in frequency of Swearing, a Man shall readi'y fall into perjury. But keeping of Oaths follows upon the sparing use of them. For a Man will either not Swear, or when he doth, will Swear aright, neither will his Tongue, by custome, outrun his mind, neither will his Mind be overthrown, by the violence of his intemperate passions. This the good Mans Verine will correct, and the customary abstinence from Swearing, will cure the other. But Swearing aright becomes the Honour of the Gods, before given in Charge, (we must remember, the Heathen Philosopher speaks of God in the plural number,) it being bred together, and a companion of Piety. Reverence an Oath by not over freely and hastily using it, that

* *εὐορκία*
* *κακία*
* *ἀνομία*
The woi
of the
Law, Ma
s. 33.
Μὴ πρὶν
ῥῆσαι καὶ
ἀποκριθῆναι
τοῖς ὅρκιοις
ἐγὼ οὐκ ἔχω
οὐδὲν ἄλλο
ἢ τὸν φόβον
τοῦ Θεοῦ.

* *Εἰ μὴ καὶ ἡ ἐξουσία τοῦ ὁρκίου*, Mark that the word *καὶ ἡ ἐξουσία*, does not alway signifie the Abuse of a thing but sometimes the full use of a thing to the utmost of its power and liberty. So St. Paul who never had thoughts of abusing his power in the Gospel, resolved to deny himself, & not using his full power of living upon the Gospel, 1 Cor. 9. 18. And the transitoriness of the World, should move Christians *μὴ καὶ ἡ ἐξουσία*, not to use it at full liberty, but sparingly, with self-denial, 1 Cor. 7. 31.

you may be accustomed to swear aright, (to wit, when there is a fit and just occasion) by not accustoming your self to Swear. For Swearing aright, is no small part of Piety. Thus the Philosopher hath secured the Reverence due to Oaths, religiously taken, by abstinence from rash, light, vain, and customary Swearing, without banishing an eminent piece of Piety and Honour due to God out of the Life of Men. This one Testimony of *Hierocles* I shall oppose, to the many examples in the Quakers Case, not for any esteem I have of the person, but for the solidity of his reason, which gives us a precedent to reconcile the Reverence of an Oath, with abstinence from customary, dangerous, and prophane Swearing, which is the taking of Gods Name in vain, and as much forbidden by God in the Third Commandement, as perjury, which the Scribes and Pharisees accounted to be the only crime struck at by *Moses*. And this is all that I have at present to say to the Question, concerning the lawfulness of Oaths under Christianity. I shall briefly recollect the summe of the whole discourse, into these Corollaries.

1. The Quakers may justly be suspected of a false pretence, when they ascribe their disobedience to authority, in refusal of Oathes, to their conscientious regard of, and to obedience to Christs Command, because they do not with equal Zeal, obey Christs Ordinances of Worship and Church Government.

2. They do very ill consult for the reputation of Christian Religion, when, by their alledging Christianity it self, for the ground of their disobedience, they make *the way of Truth, to be evil spoken*

Tim. 6.

Pet. 2. 2. of.

3. They blaspheme Christ, and his Holy Gospel, by fathering their pernicious Errors, and Heresies, upon the truth it self.

4. They reproach the Footsteps of the Lords Anointed, by charging him with persecution, when he uses the Sword for the punishment of evil doers.

5. The nature of an Oath justifies Swearing to be an act of Piety, and an instrument of Justice.

6. The Gospel of our Lord Jesus confirms the Magistrates power, to exact an Oath of his Subjects.

7. The same Doctrine binds all Subjects to obedience, when an Oath is in due manner tendred to them.

8. The Christian Liberty of Swearing upon some occasions, is not taken away by Christ and his Apostles.

9. Absti-

9. Abstinence from Oaths in ordinary communication, is commanded by the Gospel, not as a special perfection of any order of Men, but as a common Duty of all Christians, who are obliged to bridle their Tongues, and to endeavour to arrive at this perfection.

10. The Religion of Quakers, who refuse sober Oaths, but their mouth is full of Cursing and Bitterness, who incessantly spit forth the poyson of Aspes, with unbridled Tongues, is, according to St. James's Sentence, a vain Religion, from which good Lord deliver us, *Amen*.

An

APPENDIX

Of an Useful Consideration.

THe course of my *Building*, required a large discourse; first for the *digging up* and *clearing* the Ground of the *Rubbish* of erroneous conceits, and then for laying my *Foundation* deep and firm, that it might be able to bear and strengthen the *Superstructure*.

Now this being finished, I have thought fit, for a *Coronis*, to add one clear *Evidence* of their *impertinencies* who soever alleadge our *Saviours* and his *Apostles* prohibition, *Swear not at all*, to defend a refractory refusal of a *Reverent Oath*, exacted by *Authority*. Let this *parallel* be considered. Our Blessed Saviour in the same Sermon, gives another prohibition, *Judge not, that ye be not Judged*; St. Paul seconds him, and says, *Why judgest thou thy Brother? For we shall all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ. Therefore let us not judge another.* And St. James on the same ground re-enforces the restraint of judging, *There is one Law-giver* (and consequently, *one Judge*) *who is able to save and to destroy*, (to wit, God, the *Sovereign, Absolute,* and *Almighty Judge of all the World*) *who art thou that judgest another?* These words of *Christ* and his *Apostles*, are, in their sound, *universal* or *indefinite*, yet that they may be reconciled to the word of God elsewhere revealed, their *sence* must be restrained by such distinctions as are grounded upon Scripture. For if the *Law* did not limit, *we durst not*. It will not be lost labour to see this made out more fully. There are several distinctions observable, for the due limitation of this *Interdict*, *Judge not*.

First, the *Persons*, both *judging* and *judged*, are to be distinguished. *Persons* are either of a *Private* quality, and considered in that *state* which is *general* to all Men: and indeed the most of *Christs* Auditors, and of *Christians* in the days of the *Apostles* were *private Men*, and were so considered by *Christ* and his *Apostles*, according to their station in *privacy*, in regard of the *World*. Or else

Mat. 7. 1.
Rom. 14.
10. 13.

Jam. 4.
12.
Gen. 18.
25.

else Men are of a *Public* quality, invested with *Authority*.

Now if we consider Christians in their *Private* quality, every Man is, by God, made his own *Judge*, and is bound to *Judge* himself, by a certain *Rule* of *Truth* and *Righteousness*, which God hath given him; He is therefore bound to judge of his own *Faith*, and of his own *Duty*. In order to this, he is to try the *Spirits*, whether they be of God, least he be deluded and seduced by false Teachers, who may pretend to be Ministers of *Righteousness*, and boast of *Gods Spirit*, when they are indeed, the actors for the *Lying Spirit*. Christians therefore should have *sences exercised*, by study of *Gods Word*, to discern good and evil, that they may prove all things, and hold fast that which is good, which is agreeable to the form of *wholesom Doctrine*, which the *Prophets* and *Apostles*, and *Christ* the inspirer of both have taught; every Christian therefore, for his own security, must exercise a judgment of Discretion, that he may discern the *Wolves*, although clad in *Sheeps cloathing*, from the good *Shepherds* of the *Lords Flock*. And this is not a judgment of their *Persons*, but of their *Doctrines*, the reception whereof, concerns a Mans own Salvation. And if the common reason of all Men, directed by such Light as God affords them, do enable them to choose that *Church*, among the several pretending Societies of Christians at this day, with which he may safely hold *Communion*, then the same reason, with the same aids, will be sufficient to guide him to determine what *Doctrines* of *Faith* and *Manners* he may safely receive. For God hath given unto us all one *Rule* of *Faith* and *Manners*, which is common to the *Stewards*, and to the *inferiour Servants* of his *House*, the *Church*. Neither is it now possible to make a right judgment of a particular *Church*, but by conferring of their *Doctrine*, with that *Rule*. For the *Light* cannot be discerned, whether it be *True* or *False*, by the *Candlestick*, but the *Candlestick* must be judged of by the *Light*, which it upholds, and that must be tried by something else: Thus it is evident, that every one must pass a Sentence within himself, of what he must *Believe* and *Do*. Our Saviour reproves those who will not employ their *Talent* of *Reason*, and make use of their *Light*, this way, saying, *But why do ye not, even of your selves, Judge what is right, or just?* Again, every Christian is bound to judge himself, for what he hath done, to search and try his ways, whether they have been, and are conformable to the *Law* of God. God hath set up *Conscience*, a *Domestick Judge*, within a Mans own Brest, who is a *swift witness*, and an *impartial Judge*. And the sincere proceeding in judgment of our selves, is the

1 Joh. 4.

1.

2 Cor. 11.

13. 14.

15.

Heb. 5.

14.

1 Thes. 5.

21.

Rom. 6.

13.

2 Tim. 1.

13.

Eph. 2.

20.

1 Pet. 1.

11. 12.

Luk. 12.

57.

Lam. 3.

40.

the certain way both to *make*, and to *keep* our *Peace* with God.
 1 Cor. 11. For St. Paul says, *If we would Judge our selves, we should not be*
 31. *judged.* The Master says, *Judge not, to wit, others, lest ye be judg-*
ed; and the servant says, *Judge your selves; and ye shall not be judg-*
ed.

But God the Supreme Judge of all, hath delegated his own pow-
 er to certain *Ministers*, whom he hath honoured with one of
 his own *Names*, to wit, *Elohim*, and armed them with *Authority*,
 See this Title gi- to judge and punish other Men, if they be proved Malefactors.
 ven to Judges These are by Gods Ordinance advanced to sit upon the *Throne* of
 the Lord, (1 Chron. 29. 23) that they may judge for the Lord, (2
 Ps. 82. 1. Chron. 19. 7.) and their *Sentence* pronounced according to *Justice*
 6. Ex. 22. and *Equity*, is the *Judgement* of God, Deut. 1. 17.
 28. Act.

23. 5. Levit. 19. 22. where we should read, Honor the face of the old Man; and fear
 thy Judge. I am the Lord, Age is to be honoured: Authority is to be feared.

Joh. 39. This *Judicial* power derived from above, our Saviour owned in
 11. Pontius Pilate, and the Apostle St. Paul in Augustus Caesar, whom
 Act. 25. he accounted a *complete Judge*, even in matters of Religion, and
 9. 10. therefore made an *Appeal* from the Jews to the Roman Emperor.
 Briefly, it is a main point of *Christian Doctrine*, that Christians must
 be subject to the *Judicial Authority* of the Powers ordained by God

Rom. 13. in the *Civil Government* of the World. I will not now run out,
 1. 6. to shew what *spiritual* power of Government and *Jurisdiction*, the
 Tit. 3. 1. Lord hath given to his *Ministers*, intrusted with the *Pastoral* charge,
 * See for edification and not for destruction, which the * Holy Scripture
 Mat. 18. abundantly testifies.

17. & 19.
 28. Here our Saviour promises to the twelve Apostles, that in the Regeneration,
 when all things are made new, under the spiritual Kingdom of the Messiah, they shall be.
 the Judges of Gods Israel. Read 1 Cor. 5. 3. 4. 5. & 12. 28. 2 Cor. 10. 8. 1 Tim. 5. 17. 19.
 Tit. 3. 10.

To conclude then, if Christs words, *Judge not*, should be taken
 in their utmost latitude, the Lord himself would be taken for the
 Author of Confusion, and not of Peace, in the State and in the
 Church, the subverter of his own Ordinances, and his Gospel, which is
 a word of Peace, would be made an Engine to turn the World upside
 down. Thus we see a necessity of limiting them by the distinction
 of private persons judging others, which cannot be done without the
 bold intrusion upon Gods Office, and of Publick Ministers of Gods
 Govern-

Government, judging those who are under their Power, which is a lawful execution of their delegated authority.

Secondly, Christ hath given us another distinction of the manner of judging in cases, wherein Men are allowed to judge. For, he says, *Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.* Here is a double charge, *judge not*, to wit, hastily, rashly, upon weak grounds, of sight and superficial shews; and yet *judge Righteous Judgment*, that is, according to the Merit of the Cause, upon clear evidence. I need say no more, to shew that this prohibition is not to be understood in an unbounded sense.

Joh. 7.
24.

We may observe the like of our Saviours inhibition, *But I say unto you, resist not Evil*, which must be limited by the distinctions of the Evil to be resisted, and of the persons resisting. For every private Christian is a *Souldier*, who must stoutly resist that *Evil one*, that Enemy, both of God and Man, the *Devil*; and Sin, which is the Work of the *Devil*, yea, every temptation unto Sin, is to be resisted, sometimes even unto *Blood*, not actively by shedding the blood of others, but passively, by suffering our own to be shed, and by willingly pouring it out as a *drink-offering upon the Sacrifice of our Faith*. For in the *spiritual warfare* Christians are more then conquerors, when they love not their *Lives unto Death itself*. But the *Magistrate* is armed with a *Sword*, and hath a *Commission* to resist every evil work, to stop the course, and to repress the force of Sin in others, for the publick welfare and peace of the State. If therefore a Magistrate draw his *Sword*, to execute Justice, he must not put it up in his sheath, and be quiet; if the Malefactor shall say, oh Sir, you must remember the command of our Saviour, *Resist not evil*, and the check given to *Peter*, when he was unseasonably and rashly over-valiant, *Put up thy Sword into its place, for all that take the Sword, shall perish by the Sword.* Thus the *resisting evil* is unwar-rantable in private persons, but necessary in publick officers.

Mat. 5.
39.
Mat. 13.
38. 39.
1 Pet. 5.
8. 9.
Jam. 4. 7.
Heb. 12.
4.
Phil. 2.
17.
Apoc. 12.
11.

Mat. 26.
52.

To close up all, if it be an intollerable abuse of the Gospel-prohibitions aforesaid, to extend them to all occasions, whereas in many cases they are not of any force, it is equally irrational to stretch this negative, *Swear not*, to the utmost extent of the words, when they cannot consist with that *Law of God* written in the *Heart* of Man; which is also established by the *Law* written by *Moses* at Gods command, and given to his own people for a *Rule of Religion and Righteousness*; and is farther urged by the *Prophets*, who were sparing in pressing carnal Ordinances, but earnest in exacting the everlasting Righteousness of God; and is confirmed by our Bless-

sed Saviours Declaration, that he came not to abrogate any part of that Law, nor to infringe any piece of Gods Righteousness, whereof an Oath, reverently taken upon a just occasion, is a part. Let the *Adversaries* then, if they can, shew a *Disparity* between these *Prohibitions*, why the one, concerning *Judging and Resisting*, must be *limited*, and the other, concerning *Swearing*, ought not, or may not, without injury to our Blessed Saviours Authority. In the mean time I conclude in the words of St. Paul, who, with modesty and care to decline the suspicion of exercising a

2 Cor. I.

24.

1. Cor.

10. 15.

Dominion over the Faith of his Brethren, referred his Doctrine to be determined by *common reason*, upon the *general principles of Religion*, I speak as unto *Men of discretion*, judge ye what I say.

F I N I S.
